

Testimony Regarding H.B. 5582: An Act Concerning the Recommendations  
of the Impediments to Fair Housing Task Force

Orlando J. Rodriguez, M.A.

Committee on Planning and Development

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Senator Osten, Representative Rojas, and distinguished Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am a Senior Policy Fellow with Connecticut Voices for Children (Connecticut Voices), a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families. I was also co-chair of the Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Task Force. Today, I am here on behalf of Connecticut Voices to testify regarding H.B. 5582: *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Impediments to Fair Housing Task Force*.

We support this bill, which requires the Department of Housing (DoH) to, "review state housing regulations in order to determine whether such regulations comply with state and federal laws concerning fair housing." We recommend additional language to require this review to include:

- The degree to which statutes, regulations, incentives, project selection, and allocation criteria have, or have not, resulted in affirmatively furthering fair housing for families with children<sup>1</sup>.
- The degree to which statutes, regulations, incentives, project selection, and allocation criteria have, or have not, resulted in the disproportionate concentration of state-funded and federal-funded subsidized housing for families with children<sup>2</sup> in the enrollment area of schools performing *below* Proficient<sup>3</sup>.
- Necessary steps to remediate current residential segregation by race and ethnicity, which has been exacerbated by past allocations of public housing funds.
- Necessary steps to *increase* the availability of state-funded and federal-funded subsidized housing in the enrollment area of schools performing *at or above* Proficient<sup>4</sup>.

Studies have found that children who move frequently fall behind significantly in their educational attainment and are at greater risk of dropping out.<sup>5</sup> Often, the lack of long-term affordable housing is the root cause for high mobility among families with children. Furthermore, when affordable housing is available only in areas with struggling schools it further limits the opportunity for children from low-income families to break the cycle of poverty.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding H.B. 5582. We support this legislation and call for the state to more closely link housing policies and education policies in order to eliminate the large achievement gap among minority children in Connecticut.

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<sup>1</sup> Housing units are not categorized specifically as being for families with children. A unit can be categorized as a family unit but have only one bedroom. Furthermore, units intended for the elderly can be categorized as a family unit. The reference to housing units for families with children in this testimony is limited to housing units with at least two bedrooms; it excludes those housing units intended primarily for the elderly.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Based on each school's School Performance Index value.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Jacobson, Linda, *Moving Targets*, Education Week, April 4, 2001, Vo. 20, Issue 29, p. 2.